

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 233670 TOSEC 140079

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 233670 TOSEC 140079

FOLLOWING REPEAT DAMASCUS 3801 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO BEIRUT

CAIRO TEL AVIVI USUN NY ZEN/AMMAN

DTD 30 SEPT

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 3801

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, IS, US

SUBJECT: SHIHABI ON PROSPECT OF NEGOTIATIONS

1. COS SHIHABI COMMENTED SEPTEMBER 29 THAT HE DID NOT KNOW IF PRESIDENT HAD YET REACHED DECISION WHETHER TO ENGAGE IN NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING GOLAN. SAID IN HIS OPINION FIRST QUESTION TO BE DECIDED WAS WHETHER SYRIA COULD EXPECT TO ACHIEVE ANYTHING THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS OR WOULD MERELY BE COURTING CERTAIN HUMILIATION. IN HIS ESTIMATION THE OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS WERE DISTINCTLY UNFAVORABLE FOR SYRIA. HE SAW TWO MAIN FACTS: FIRST, ISRAEL HAD MADE AMPLY CLEAR THE RIGIDITY OF ITS POSITION CONCERNING GOLAN; SECOND, US ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL FLOWING FROM ACCORD HAD LEFT US LITTLE LEVERAGE OVER ISRAEL TO APPLY TO GOLAN TALKS.

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PAGE 02 STATE 233670 TOSEC 140079

2. REPLIED THAT WHILE I COULD UNDERSTAND DESIRE TO AVOID

HUMILIATION, IT SEEMED ILLOGICAL TO ASSUME ONE COULD PROJECT RESULTS OF A NEGOTIATION WITHOUT DIRECTLY EXPLORING ITS PROSPECTS THROUGH ENGAGING. SHIHABI SAID THERE NO QUESTION SYRIA WOULD PREFER NEGOTIATIONS IF IT CONVINCED THEY WOULD ACHIEVE PEACE. CONTINUED "BUT THIS MUST NOT BE JUST ANY PEACE, NOT JUST THE PEACE WHICH ISRAEL WANTS." SUGGESTED TO HIM THAT WE SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE ISRAELI INTEREST IN PEACE WITH SYRIA, IF ONLY FOR REASON ISRAEL WISHED PROTECT ACHIEVEMENTS GAINED IN SINAI ACCORD. HANDED HIM COPY OF JULY 25 JERUSALEM POST ARTICLE BY VAN CREVELD WHICH ARGUED AGAINST JUSTIFICATION OF OCCUPATION OF GOLAN AND OTHER TERRITORIES IN NAME ISRAELI SECURITY. SAID WITH THIS SORT OF FERMENT UNDERWAY IN ISRAEL, SYRIA SHOULD SEEK INCREASE TREND BY PURSUING PATH OF NEGOTIATIONS. ASSURED HIM WE WERE READY TO MAKE SERIOUS EFFORT ON BEHALF OF GOLAN NEGOTIATIONS. ALL PARTIES SHOULD BE CONCERNED LEST SITUATION BECAME FROZEN. WE NEVER INTENDED SINAI ACCORD AS LAST STEP BUT RATHER AS FIRST OF SEVERAL WHICH ACHIEVEMENT OF LASTING PEACE WOULD REQUIRE.

MURPHY UNQUOTE
INGERSOLL

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